

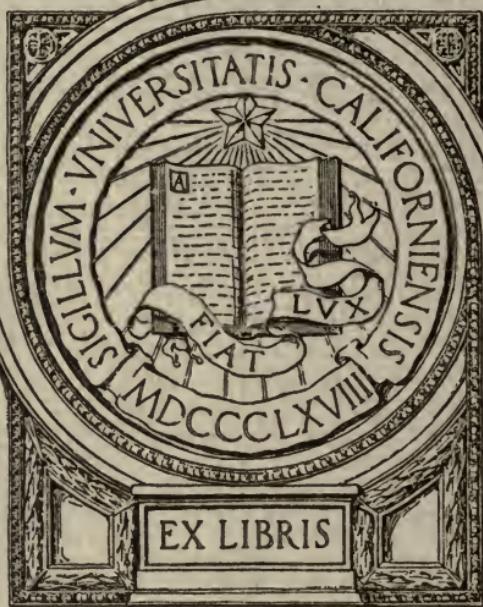
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HOW TO PAY FOR THE WAR.

A Practical Scheme for Improving
Our Foreign Trade.

By

WILFRID STOKES

*(Chairman of the Executive Committee
of The British Engineers' Association).*

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NOTICE.

The following scheme for the formation of a new Government Department, viz., a Board of Industry, was first brought before a Meeting of the British Engineers' Association at Manchester, on December 15th, 1914.

The scheme has already met with a considerable measure of support from industrial and trade Associations, Chambers of Commerce and other interested bodies, who have been asked to appoint representatives to form a Joint Committee to consider and if necessary to amend the scheme before it is submitted to the Government.

Members of both Houses of Parliament have also expressed approval and offered their co-operation.

The present publication is made in order to enlist the sympathy and support of all who are interested in extending our foreign trade.

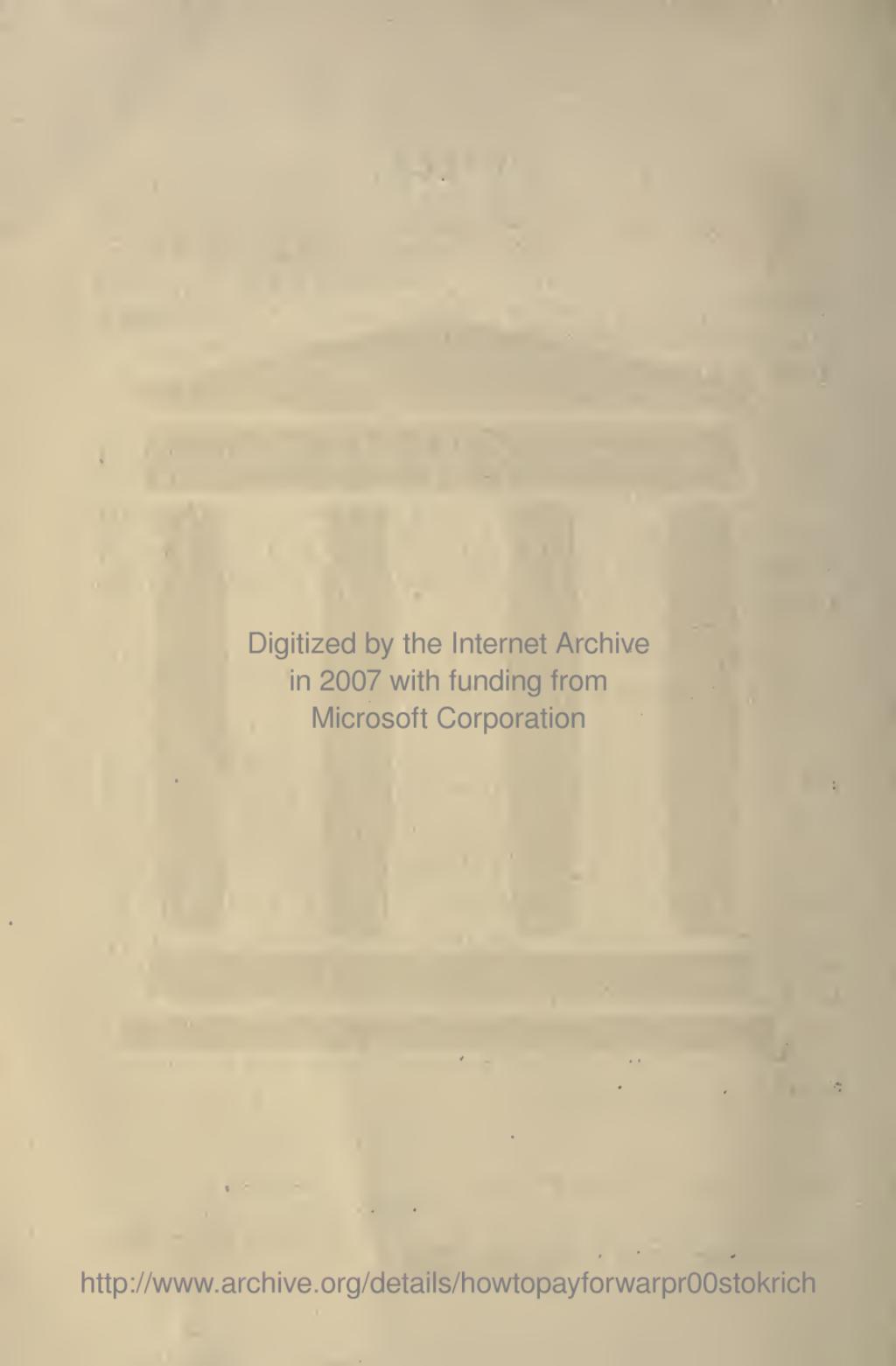
Last year our exports amounted to nearly £600,000,000, and, if the results of the present proposal were to add only 10% to this figure the country would be benefited to the extent of £60,000,000, with the further advantages to shipping, transport and banking which do not appear in export returns.

The cost of the proposed new Board of Industry would thus appear to be fully justified.

STAFFORD RANSOME,

*Secretary,
British Engineers' Association.*

32, Victoria Street, S.W. **325128**

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HOW TO PAY FOR THE WAR.

PROPOSED BOARD OF INDUSTRY.

At the present moment attention naturally turns to our foreign trade conditions and how they are and may be affected by the war.

There is a general feeling that all is not as it should be and that too much has been left to chance while, as a nation, we are not maintaining our position in the markets of the world.

An endeavour will be made to show that the solution of this problem lies in the formation of a Government Board of Industry.

Britain's greatness is result of Trade.

It is quite clear that much of Britain's greatness lies in her trade and manufactures, chiefly in connection with export.

As the prosperity of the community is made up of that of the individual, it is only proper that the community should act so as to help the individual, not necessarily as an individual, but as a class of individuals.

The resulting prosperity would be felt generally, and would act and react on the whole community.

State should foster Trade.

Hence the State should, as one of its most important functions, foster trade and manufactures.

This function is quite distinct and apart from party politics, and people of all shades of political opinion should co-operate, while both employers and workmen are equally interested in helping.

All Government departments should be so constituted and managed that they fulfil the purpose for which they are formed (indirectly, it is true) by the community. When in the judgment of a majority any changes are required, these changes should be made without hesitation.

Co-operation necessary for reform.

If any useful reforms are to be accomplished within a reasonable time a strong combination is necessary amongst those who will most directly benefit by them.

As in the case of machinery to be sold in a competitive market, success is impossible without co-operation between classes of tradesmen, salesmen and capitalists, so, when it comes to international trading, individual effort must be assisted by co-operation with the combined influence and weight of the community if it is to be thoroughly effective against the manufacturers of other nations, who are properly supported in this manner.

With regard to the Army and Navy and in State and Municipal affairs, this principle is fully recognised.

Trade now left to individual effort.

When it comes to trade, however, and more particularly to foreign trade, upon which so much depends, matters are left almost entirely to individual effort.

This system is obviously defective, but if proof be needed it is only necessary to turn to the methods adopted by Germany in recent years and to note the marked success resulting from them. Although it is not suggested that all such methods are advisable or com-

mendable, yet they are all founded upon the sound common-sense basis that the community should, as a whole, foster and help foreign trade, and thereby, as a whole, reap the benefit.

Adequate funds not provided by the State.

It may be urged that we have a Board of Trade and a Foreign Office whose functions are to look after and extend our foreign trade.

When, however, we come to examine the machinery available, there at once appears a great lack of anything like completeness or businesslike methods. In the first place, there are practically no funds set aside by the State for the purpose of generally advancing foreign trade.

Limited Foreign Office support.

Apart from the Consular Service, the Foreign Office staff interested in trade in foreign countries, as a rule, consists of Commercial Attachés, having little or no special knowledge or commercial training, whose object it is to get as quickly as possible into the senior and better-paid diplomatic posts.

As to the numbers of these officials, we may take China as an example. That country, with vast openings for trade with Great Britain, has one Commercial Attaché to cope with British trade questions arising from a population of over 400,000,000, and a yearly import trade of some £80,000,000.

The following is an example of how the Foreign Office is hampered by want of funds:—Quite recently the only two daily papers printed in English in Peking have been bought up by Germany, obviously for the purpose of misleading the Chinese by news purporting to come from British sources, and therefore presumably true. Much as the Foreign Office may regret this attack by

Germany, nothing can be done, as no funds are available. Could anything be more deplorable?

Limited support of Board of Trade.

Turning to the Board of Trade, there is in London a well-managed Commercial Intelligence Department, which is doing its best under adverse circumstances. It publishes a Journal and issues reports received via the Foreign Office and the Board of Trade from British Consuls, many of whom are unpaid, and allowed to trade on their own account, some of whom are of alien nationality, and all of whom have many other duties which they regard as more pressing. There are, in addition, four not too well paid Trade Commissioners with their trade correspondents, who, although keen and capable, are unable to do much more than pick up information from friends and others whose interests in no way encourage them to give prompt and useful information. Thus these reports are of little practical value.

¶ A small sum (about £500) is spent annually by the Board of Trade on special trade research work in various countries.

Board of Trade has too many functions.

As to the Board of Trade itself, its functions are much too general. Its constitution was never intended to apply to the furtherance of foreign trade, it is not suited for that purpose, and, as at present constituted, never can be. It may almost be said that its principal functions involve the hindrance of trade by imposing rules and restrictions, which often, owing to the lack of special knowledge, are so framed as to cause unnecessary difficulties.

Without reflecting upon the personnel of the Board of Trade, it is, perhaps, not out of place to point out

that there is no suitable training provided for it. For this the general system of entrance examinations to the Civil Service must be blamed.

Defective Staff training.

After passing an entrance examination on subjects not necessarily connected in any way with the work expected of the candidate, he is left to pick up in the best way he can the details of the work of the office of which, by a process of survival, he may ultimately become the head. He has no incentive to get through the day's work except in the easiest way. It is, therefore, not fair to blame him if this system tends to make him cramped in outlook, bound round with red tape methods, lacking in initiative, and reluctant to receive outside assistance. It would indeed be remarkable if such a result did not follow so imperfect a training.

President has too many functions.

The Minister at the head of the Board of Trade, as its President for the time being, is a purely political functionary placed in that position for many reasons other than his possessing a special practical training in, or knowledge of, the trade requirements of the country. In any case, however, it would be very difficult to combine in one man a specialist in the very different kinds of work dealt with by the Board of Trade, including as it does patents, bankruptcy, railways, shipping, electric light and power, and a host of other subjects, as well as foreign trade.

Present system not up-to-date.

So far these criticisms of our present system have been destructive. They are made solely to show that there are openings for improvements, and that our arrangements are not adequate to cope with twentieth

century conditions, which, it should be remembered, are fundamentally different from the conditions prevailing when Britain was practically alone in being able to supply by her manufactures the requirements of undeveloped and less civilised countries.

British manufacturers are twitted with their unprogressive and stay-at-home methods in connection with foreign trade. It does not, however, improve matters or make trading easier that the community as a whole, through its State officials, should have this same fault in a marked degree, and should refrain from giving that support and assistance which alone can come from the authority and backing of the nation.

Such backing and support is given by other foreign nations, notably by Germany, and recent revelations consequent on the war have prepared the way for the favourable consideration of improved methods in connection with our own trading.

Lack of Activity.

It may also be safely stated that many of the trade complications now prevalent would not have arisen had there been a proper system of State supervision of foreign enterprise in this country, nor would the alien enemy trading question have been left so long uncontrolled.

It requires no arguments to prove that State influence and help in connection with foreign trade should be established on sound common-sense business principles; in fact, on lines not unlike those of a great business concern having dealings with foreign countries.

In order to deal with the present problem on sound business lines, it is advisable to obtain the help of the best men available. This could best be done by the creation of a Board of Industry constituted somewhat as follows:—

CONSTITUTION OF THE PROPOSED BOARD OF INDUSTRY.

Permanent President.—Man of great business ability, permanently in office, and with the rank of a Cabinet Minister, or with the right to bring his Council's views before the Cabinet in person.

Elected Council.—Fifteen leading men of business ability, representing the industries of agriculture, banking, building materials, chemicals, cutlery, electricity, engineering, foodstuffs, hardware, iron and steel, leather, paper, railways, shipping, and textiles. Also one representative each of the Indian Empire, and the self-governing Dominions of Canada, Newfoundland, Australia, Union of South Africa and New Zealand, preferably the High Commissioners or their nominees, and three representatives of the Crown Colonies.

Parliamentary Secretary.—Appointed by party in office.
Permanent Staff with attractive salaries.

*Secretaries.—With considerable business experience.

*Staff.—With previous business experience.

*Clerks.—With business training.

*Trade Commissioners.—With Staff and Trade correspondents, as may be required—in India, each Self-governing Dominion, each Crown Colony, and each Foreign Country—and with wide experience of trade conditions and requirements of the territories in which they operate.

*Promotion to be made on merits, not by seniority, and an incentive given to promote actively Foreign Trade.

Country can well afford outlay.

The increased prosperity of the country would more than repay the increased outlay. Last year the amount of our foreign trade was over £1,400,000,000, yet the cost of running the whole of the Board of Trade, *including all the home departments*, was only about £213,000, or, say, $3\frac{1}{2}$ d. per £100 of the trade done, of which the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. more than covers the expenditure on Foreign Trade departments. What private business trading with foreign countries could hope to prosper with such a trifling expenditure for general supervision and exploitation from headquarters.

No attempt is made to enter into minor details of the necessary extensions and changes in our present system, but having arrived at an agreement on first principles, the rest may safely be left for subsequent development.

Reasons for State help.

It should be clear that—

- (a) The prosperity of Britain depends upon her exports of manufactured goods and material.
- (b) The more fully the country is kept employed the better it is for the community.
- (c) It is therefore fit and proper for the community to help as a whole in the furtherance of foreign trade and exports in the best possible manner.
- (d) From which it follows that there should be a generously financed State Department whose *sole* duty it is to deal with this all-important matter.

As we have an Army and Navy, with their experienced technical advisers, to defend our country, so we should have bodies of trained men, under equally qualified leaders, all over the world, to defend our trade.

This trained force to defend our trade should be brought up with an intimate knowledge of our business requirements and methods, and should not solely be occupied behind desks in Government offices. The leaders of this force should be sufficiently well paid to attract men of marked capacity and ambition away from private business careers.

A remodelled entrance examination for the class of *permanent* clerks might be adopted, but for those entering more prominent positions the selection should not be made till a proof of ability was available from other business positions successfully filled.

Paid Elected Council of business men.

The paid Council, composed of fifteen of the best business men of the country (elected for, say, three years) and of representatives of the High Commissioners of our Self governing Dependencies, the India Office, and the Agents-General for the Colonies, should meet at intervals and decide upon the general policy. Some of its members should from time to time be told off to pay visits to foreign countries and to our Colonies to collect information at first hand. The head of this Council should be a member of the Cabinet; or, if this is found impracticable, he should have easy access to the Cabinet on all matters relating to the industries of the country. He should be a *permanent* official chosen for his ability, and should receive a good salary, with a suitable retiring allowance at a reasonable age.

Parliamentary Secretary.

The Council should be accessible to manufacturers and traders, and should welcome suggestions from them. The Parliamentary mouthpiece of the Council

might well be a Secretary appointed by the Government in office, but with very limited powers with regard to the work of the Council.

Numerous Trade Commissioners.

Numerous qualified Trade Commissioners should be appointed in our dependencies and Colonies and in foreign countries, each with an adequate staff and ample office accommodation in a good position, and with facilities for displaying samples and giving the travelling representatives of British traders temporary accommodation when meeting customers or transacting business.

It should be the duty of the Trade Commissioner to collect and report to headquarters at short intervals useful information concerning openings for trade and the activities of our foreign competitors. Samples of goods required and directories and classified lists should be available, and efforts should be made to help to bring together buyer and seller in the interests of the Empire.

Extended Foreign Office support.

As to the Foreign Office, all our Ambassadors and Ministers should be instructed to use their best endeavours to advance trade relations with the countries in which they are placed, notably in connection with international loans. They should treat trade as a matter of the first importance whenever an opportunity arises, and should be provided with ample funds for the purpose of pushing British trade interests. At the present moment these interests are to a great extent neglected.

The Commercial Attaché service should offer a career separate and distinct from that of diplomacy; it should be well paid and otherwise made attractive.

Under existing conditions an Attaché has to serve for two years without salary, and for four or five subsequent years at a salary of £150 per annum.

Reforms cannot be expected from within.

Now, how can all these most desirable changes be brought about?

It is quite clear that single-handed no one can hope for success, and there are many drawbacks to making these reforms a party question.

It is equally clear that such a drastic change cannot be expected to come from within.

In 1905 the King's Speech at the opening of Parliament contained the promise of a Ministry of Commerce, but nothing has been done as yet in this direction.

B.E.A. to take the initiative.

It would therefore appear that a neutral body, such as the British Engineers' Association, would be well fitted to move in the first instance and obtain the co-operation of other purely British trade societies in order to awaken public opinion to the *urgent* need of these reforms, so that the Government may move promptly in the matter, without making it a party question.

If the whole of the British engineering industry were to combine for this object, it could not fail to achieve its purpose. The present moment is particularly favourable to such a movement, and, although there are difficulties in the way of such radical changes as are proposed, it cannot be denied that they are demanded by practical common sense.

Increased Trade to Pay for the War.

The cost of this war will be very great, so great indeed that its payment must be spread over a very long term of years. If our foreign trade is bad in the future, this burden will be hard to bear. It is thus our obvious duty, as a community, to extend and improve our foreign trade to the utmost by all legitimate means.

The monetary debt caused by the war must be borne both by us and our descendants. It is to be regretted that the debt must be passed on, but this scheme for extending Foreign Trade should be welcomed on the ground that it opens a way to lighten the burden both now and in the future. Even if the way is beset by great difficulties, it is our duty not to shrink from them, but to give whole-hearted and effective support.

The Object of this Pamphlet.

To sum matters up, the purpose of this pamphlet is to show that:—

- (1) The continued greatness of Britain depends upon her trade, and her trade depends upon her industries.
- (2) The State should take all practicable steps to help the industries and thereby increase the trade of the country.
- (3) The present State help extended to our foreign trade is quite inadequate.
- (4) If it were made adequate the resulting increase in prosperity would materially help in paying for the war, and also in solving the labour problems which will inevitably follow the declaration of peace.

Those who believe that reforms should be made in the direction indicated, and who, from one cause or another, cannot take an active part in the war, have now an opportunity of helping to promote the prosperity of our country.

THE NEED FOR A BOARD OF INDUSTRY.

EXTRACTS FROM PRESS OPINIONS ON THE SCHEME.

The Engineer :—“In these days, when manufacturers are being urged to capture German trade, it is natural for the critic to ask, ‘How are they to do so unless they are properly supported by the Government?’ In other words, it is easy to indulge in destructive criticism, but quite a different matter to point out a remedy for the evil. It is precisely because, after criticising the methods of the powers that be, Mr. Stokes suggests a definite line of action for overcoming these difficulties, that his speech is of great value.

“It is probable that few of our readers will hold the view that the Board of Trade, as at present constituted, and the diplomatic and consular services as carried on by the Foreign Office, are adequately equipped for encouraging and protecting our foreign trade. The Board of Trade was originally intended to deal primarily with transport; that is to say, everything which has to do with our shipping, railways, and other carrying agencies. It was, in fact, what in some countries is known as a Board of Communications; a Board which controls the great arteries of commerce; a Board of Trading rather than a Board of Trade. We have nothing to say with regard to the manner in which it carries out these functions, nor have we here to deal with the manner in which it handles bankruptcy, patents, or labour, and conducts the hundred and one other functions it now has to fulfil. But we cordially agree with Mr. Stokes that it is intolerable that at the present day a department, which is expected to carry out properly these multifarious duties, should have

tacked on to it, as a sort of accessory, the controlling of the foreign trade on which the prosperity of Great Britain relies. . . . We shall not labour here the point so often made as to the inefficiency of our consular service. The main function of a consul is not to increase British business. 'Just as we have an Army and Navy,' says Mr. Stokes, 'to defend our country, so we should have bodies of trained men all over the world to defend our trade.' In other words, he would relieve our Consuls of that accessory to their other multifarious duties, the forwarding of British industrial interests. . . . It is the efficiency of the central body—that is to say, the Board of Industry—that would determine the effectiveness of the plan put forward by Mr. Stokes. In dealing with this portion of his difficult problem, however, Mr. Stokes is as distinct and direct in his recommendations as in the rest of his theme. The function of the president is not merely to consult the members of his council, but to act on their advice. . . . Above all, everyone holding any important position in the Board of Industry at home would be a man fitted by his training for the purpose, and the same qualities would be expected in all the trade commissioners, commercial attachés, and their subordinates in their respective localities.

"We do not disguise from ourselves the fact that the scheme now propounded is of an extremely ambitious nature, but we venture to say that it is an ambition which is well justified. We cannot doubt that if the scheme were put into effect it would provide a solution of the greatest difficulty which stands in the way of our foreign business. . . . Whatever the ultimate success of the suggested reforms may be, they are of vital interest, not merely to engineers, but to everybody, and they are deserving of the utmost attention at the present time. It is not a question of party politics.

It is not a question that divides master and man, for it is as important to the one as to the other. The war has gone far to teach the people of England how little their trade interests have been supported in the past by the Government, and we are perfectly sure that our industries between them are capable of bringing about any reasonable reforms in this respect if they choose to use their united power to effect this purpose."

Daily Telegraph :—“There is reason to suppose that if the whole of the British engineering industry were to combine with the object of awakening public opinion to the urgent need of reform of our trade development mechanism, it would be possible for a new body to be evolved which could be of incalculable use to British traders in the coming industrial struggle. The British Engineers’ Association has been indicated by Mr. Wilfrid Stokes in a pamphlet, ‘How to Pay for the War,’ as the neutral body most fitted to move in the first instance. Mr. Stokes suggests the constitution of a Board of Industry, which would leave to the Board of Trade those departments of commerce for the assistance of which it was originally established. The Foreign Office is, of course, supposed to aid in the development of our trade abroad through the Consular Service, but in practice the support of the Foreign Office as given by its commercial attachés is distinctly feeble, as up to now the latter have had little or no special knowledge or commercial training. It is gratifying to learn from the fifth report of the Royal Commission on the Civil Service, issued a few days ago, that certain of these proposals are actually recommended to be carried into effect, thereby lending hope to the belief that if sufficient pressure be applied, something on the lines of the proposed Board of Industry may materialise before the great opportunity has passed away. Thus the report recommends that commercial attachés should be

advisory officers, and should not be engaged on the ordinary duties of a diplomatic mission. Their districts should not be larger than they can travel over effectively, and they should spend the greater part of their time in travelling through them, and only three months of each year at most in Great Britain. There should be commercial attachés for the American Continent.

.... We understand that the support of engineers, the engineering institutions, and of other bodies and individuals, is being enlisted by the association, and it is to be hoped that all who are desirous of seeing this great reform carried out will not fail to write to the British Engineers' Association, at 32, Victoria Street, S.W., expressing their approval of the effort that is being made to launch a practical scheme for improving our foreign trade."

Manchester Guardian :—“ What we have to do is to see, not simply that we execute such orders as the war may drive into our lap, but that British goods shall not in the future, for lack of intelligent foresight and enterprise, be unable to hold their own against foreign, particularly German and Austrian, competition. At present the functions of the Government in these matters are divided between the Foreign Office, the Board of Trade, and the Colonial Office. It is hardly possible that the duties of all three can be properly related to one another. Government departments carry on their own affairs with less and less regard for the opinions and doings of other departments, and so far as the supervision of British trade interests is concerned the union of functions in one department has much to be said for it.”

Manchester Guardian :—“ British engineers are slowly but surely becoming alive to the value of co-

operation, but many seem still to doubt its practicability on a really effective scale. . . . Diffidence is the besetting danger to all affluent and magnanimous peoples, and in no way is this more swiftly exhibited and punished than in our diffident attitude towards co-operation in foreign markets. We would co-operate when co-operation has been successful. We would pay our subscriptions to the co-operative movement when we see that everybody else is paying and profiting. In fact, we would co-operate when all logic is turned upside down and result by some miracle is made to precede cause. Only we would not call it a miracle, but our national luck. . . . The relation of the Board of Trade and of the Consular Service to our effort in foreign markets does not especially concern engineers, but at least it concerns them as much as it concerns any section of traders. We need not labour the shortcomings of our Consular Service or the entirely passive virtues of the Board of Trade. Everybody knows the comparative uselessness of both. The first has been spoiled by the employment of what may be called 'casual labour,' consuls who are consuls in their spare time; and the latter by choking itself with work that the ordinary conditions of competition would do almost equally well. If it is necessary to have a Government Department to look after the handles of railway carriage doors, by all means let us have it, but do not let us call it a Board of Trade, and do not let it include the Archbishop of Canterbury or the Speaker of the Irish House of Commons. The moment the economic factors which are directly contingent on the war, of which the British Navy is very easily the biggest, are nullified by peace, we shall have to face German competition again. It may take forms different from heretofore; it will certainly in some directions be eventually fiercer than ever, and in those directions in which the result of the war will deaden German efforts there will

be American efforts. We cannot count on a very long recuperative interval before we are face to face with the most determined competition from the two nations whose consular and trade bureau services are the best in the world. What equipment have we got to oppose to theirs?"

The Globe :—“ We published yesterday a speech recently delivered by Mr. Wilfrid Stokes, chairman of the Executive Committee of the British Engineers’ Association, on a subject which is to-day of dominant interest for the Empire—the question of the organisation of our trade and industry. Although the war has been going on for only five months, it has already revealed in a hundred unsuspected ways the defects of that vast and complex machinery on which the whole of our prosperity depends, and the extent to which we had, through sheer lethargy, allowed ourselves to be shouldered out of branches of production in which we ought to hold our own. The new conditions have also not only inspired efforts to recapture markets which we had lost, but have convinced the least reflecting that to achieve that purpose much more is necessary than to walk through an open door. We have to equip ourselves for the conquest with the same thoroughness and discipline that the Germans have manifested in occupying the ground that they have now had to surrender.

“ The plain fact is that, although we for more than a hundred years enjoyed the name of ‘ a nation of shopkeepers,’ we have never acted up to it. All the powerful influence of the State has been withheld from the advancement of what were, after all, the greatest of national interests. The idea that prevailed for many years with our statesmen was that, while trade might properly be controlled, it was not part of the duty of the Governments to assist it. Latterly, there has been

some modification of this lofty attitude of detachment; but the modification has been half-hearted, as if those who consented were not really convinced and only yielded to an odious necessity which they could not avert. Our Consular service is still but badly organised for what should be its primary function. Many of our Consuls are unpaid, and many of them are foreigners; and though the Commercial Intelligence Department of the Board of Trade supplies much useful information, it is very far from being in as close touch with merchants and manufacturers as it should be.

“This war ought to teach us what we have been so slow to learn—that trade, like every other national activity, needs to be scientifically organised, and that the State can perform no higher function than in co-operating in that work of organisation. We want a department whose sole and single duty shall be to charge itself with those manifold responsibilities to the trade of the country that only an agency with the authority and the resources of the State behind it can fulfil. There is no question of putting private enterprise into leading strings or of doing for traders what they can do much better for themselves. It is a question of affording the facilities and the co-operation which at present are so largely lacking. The whole cost of the services rendered officially to our foreign trade at present is well under half a million, and yet that trade itself is of the annual value of 1,400 millions. No little blame for the existing state of things rests with our manufacturers and merchants themselves. But they have it now in their power to secure a system which shall place the fabric of our trade on a new and scientifically organised basis.”

East Anglian Daily Times :—“Mr. Stokes cannot be accused of timidity in regard to this matter, and, in fact, a good many politicians will be aghast at the bold-

ness of the idea. He appeals, however, to the statesmen of the country rather than to the politicians, and there can be no gainsaying the fact that the greatness and completeness of the plan saves it from being relegated to the wastepaper basket unconsidered. Germany has done officially a good deal for her trade; in fact, the extension of German trade has become a German obsession, leading to objectionable practices, and we do not want to emulate them in their objectionableness. We have always realised, however, that more could be done for British trade through our Consular system, if that system was put on a proper footing, and that is the starting point of Mr. Stokes's scheme. He goes very much further than that—his scheme being virtually to replace the Consuls in relation to trade by Imperial Trade Commissioners and fully qualified Commercial Attachés, selected, not through political or other influence, but because of their undoubted commercial talents and suitable knowledge. The volume of foreign trade is of such great importance to a manufacturing nation like ourselves that we ought to be prepared to expend a great deal more on fostering and increasing it than we do at present. Therefore we welcome the question that has been raised, and trust that the proposal put forward will receive deliberate and careful consideration at the hands of all who are specially interested in the subject."

Manchester Courier :—“ We may describe our attitude to the foreign trade of the country as individualism run mad. But it has been worse than that; it has been criminal in its disregard for all but selfish interests. As long as State help to our foreign trade and its development is the plaything of party shibboleths there is not much hope of sensible and necessary guidance and encouragement. Whilst the hatchet is buried now is the

golden opportunity in more senses than one. The need of a generously financed State department, whose sole duty it should be to help in the furtherance of foreign trade, was Mr. Stokes's thesis. The need is for trained men all over the world to defend our trade, under equally qualified leaders. If the other organised professions and industries move in the matter, the Government may listen. Perhaps all the political parties then would approach this subject of a trade 'war' abroad with the same unity of purpose as they are doing the struggle-at-arms in which the Empire is engaged."

Irish Times :—“ Mr. Stokes points out that we have no efficient machinery for dealing with the great problems and opportunities which the near future must bring. The Foreign Office and the Board of Trade are seriously hampered by lack of funds. . . . These are fundamental reforms, but it is quite possible that some such scheme may become a part of the great national reorganisation which must follow the war. Success in this war will not make us masters of Germany's world markets: it will only give us a magnificent opportunity to capture them.”

Page's Engineering Weekly :—“ It is well known that the constitution of the British Board of Trade is the same to-day as in 1786, notwithstanding the fact that the value of our imports and exports has grown from £68,620,000 in 1800 to £1,237,035,959 in 1911. But for absolute ineptitude and neglect of British interests in foreign States we doubt if any other country could, or would, compare with our Consular service. It seems scarcely credible that until recently the British Consul-General for the German Empire was not even British; in fact, like the interests he must, in thought,

if not in deed, have represented he was, like many other of his so-called British Consular confrères, German! Need we say more?"

Electrical Times :—"The greatness of England depends very largely upon her foreign trade. That is why there is no official recognition of it; for a department which expends $\frac{1}{4}$ d. on every £100 of foreign trade is really not worth mentioning at all. The Board of Trade suffers under a misnomer; its activities are often in the *restraint* of trade. The year 1915, we believe, will see the birth of a new commercial policy, and possibly a new Governmental department. That possibility must profoundly affect British engineers and engineering, and it is for this reason that we have accorded somewhat more space than we otherwise might have done to a recent speech by Mr. Wilfrid Stokes, of the British Engineers' Association. Mr. Stokes has said what many of us were thinking."

Hardwareman and Ironmonger's Chronicle :—"The prosperity of the British Empire is bound up with the progress and development of British trade and industry. Before the war the assistance given by the British Government to the promotion of our trade interests abroad was mainly of an academic character, and chiefly consisted of the issue of reports written by British Consuls in foreign countries or by the Trade Commissioners in the Dominions overseas. . . . It requires no argument to prove that State influence and help in connection with foreign trade should be established on sound common-sense business principles."

The Marine Engineer :—"In order to deal with the problem on a practical basis, the British Engineers' Association have been utilising the energies of their

Executive Committee, and the Chairman of this Committee has indicated certain lines of possible development which appear to us to be deserving of serious attention."

Mechanical World :—"So much has been heard during the past few months of the need for the development of British trade abroad, and so little has been done, that one is almost thrown back to the belief that, unaided, British manufacturers are unable or refuse to do what is necessary in order to carry out what we are being so frequently told is essential. The relation of our Consular service to the needs of the Empire's trade is still a long way from being what one would call efficient, and it is in this connection that a suggestion by Mr. Wilfrid Stokes, Chairman of the British Engineers' Association, comes with some force."

The Indiaman :—"As supplementary to the Foreign Office and Board of Trade, there undoubtedly exists useful opportunity for additional machinery designed to extend and develop Great Britain's foreign trade."

Manchester Dispatch :—"The scheme for the formation of a new Government department, to be designated the Board of Industry, is receiving considerable support. One of the strong arguments in favour of the creation of a Board of Industry is that it might help the country to pay for the war by means of increased trade."

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